

Community College Commission

Mission and philosophy

The mission of the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) is to advocate community college education, provide coordination among system colleges, present budget requests, and collaboratively develop reports on college performance to the legislature and governor. The community college system is essential to the civic and economic health of Wyoming, and every resident seeking access to the system is a valued commission constituent.

Results of outcomes

The WCCC establishes tuition rates for the community colleges. Tuition rates for the 2004-2005 academic year were set by the commission on November 14, 2003 at \$55 per credit hour for resident students, \$83 per credit hour for Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) students, and \$165 per credit hour for non-resident students. Setting tuition at these rates was a continuation of a long-term tuition policy that was adopted in 2001. As part of the policy, data showing the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) states' tuition rates and ratios of tuition and fees to median household income were reported in the 2003 Annual Tuition Review. In the analysis presented to the commissioners, the Wyoming community college average tuition and fees were 4.1 percent of Wyoming's median household income. This ratio was the same as the median of the comparator group that included WICHE states less California and including Nebraska. Therefore, the commission adopted the anticipated 4 percent increase in tuition for the next academic year resulting in the tuition rates above.

The WCCC negotiated contracts and provided financial support for the college system's approved administrative computing system components and related education delivery support systems, with the support and guidance of the Community Colleges' Information Technology (IT) Committee.

Since initial deployment of a fully integrated administrative computing system for all seven colleges in 1992, numerous enhancements and upgrades have been implemented and developed enabling colleges to meet unique institutional needs and provide a user-friendly environment for students and staff. Major system enhancements included implementation of reporting software, graphical user interfaces, Envision Tool-Kit, Access-Link, hardware and peripherals.

In 2004, the Colleges' IT Task Force continued to drive the integration of administrative computing and telecommunications in the community colleges. The key area of

General information

Ed Boenisch, Interim Executive Director

Agency contact

Andrea Bryant, Policy Analyst
307/777-7226
2020 Carey Avenue, 8th Floor
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002
abryant@commission.wcc.edu

Year established and reorganized

Established 1951; reorganized 2000.

Statutory references

W.S. 21-18-202

Number of authorized personnel

10

Clients served

Community Colleges, Governor, Legislature, Wyoming residents

Budget information

Administration	\$2,294,511
State Aid to Colleges	67,886,194
Contingency Reserve (Coal Bonus).....	1,600,000
Wyoming Public Television	881,852
LEAP	168,750
Incentive Funds	280,000
Major Maintenance Funding	2,007,900

Number of members

Seven

Meeting frequency

Quarterly

concentration was oriented to development of Wyoming's e-learning environment. Projects, such as implementation of e-advising suite, e-commerce module, Instant Enrollment, consolidation of the course and curriculum development software (WebCt and Blackboard) and electronic transcript transmission were in progress. Planning continued on deployment of newer more capable hardware and computer operating systems to support enhanced software.

Integral components of college administrative computing are wide area networks and Internet. The Wyoming Equality Network provided the college system with important telecommunications at a reasonable cost. This network has experienced a 400 percent growth at the seven colleges in required services since 1997 with new equipment and software enhancements added annually, yet costs remained at \$30,000 annually.

The WCCC maintains a funding allocation model that determines the funding gap (if one exists) between the Wyoming community college system and comparator institutions nationwide. The funding model also determines the distribution of state-aid-to-colleges.

During the second year of the biennium (FY 04), state aid was distributed to the colleges according to the approved distribution method. Funds restricted for health insurance benefits to eligible college employees were distributed separately.

The run of the funding model for the submission of the 2005-2006 biennial budget identified a parity gap of \$4.6 million. Equity ratios were established and distribution of the new state aid was determined.

Through the process of this second biennial run of the funding model and the required review of the comparators, necessary revisions to the process of requesting and distributing funds have been identified. These revisions will be presented for approval and implementation in the 2005 supplemental budget session.

The WCCC establishes and promotes accomplishment of statewide priorities for the college system in consultation with the colleges. This important function and service happens throughout the year through the WCCC staff who coordinate with various committees representing important segments of the seven colleges:

- Executive Council (presidents)
- Academic Affairs Committee (academic deans/VPs)
- Student Services Committee (student services deans/VPs)
- Administrative Services Committee (business deans/VPs)
- Information Technology Committee
- Institutional Research Committee
- Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (distance education coordinators)

Incentive funds of \$250,000 were used for statewide projects involving all seven community colleges and the WCCC. A conference for faculty and support staff was

conducted May 25-26, 2004 at Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne. The emphasis was on helping faculty use distance education resources in their classrooms, including designing and offering new courses. Over 135 college faculty and staff participated in concurrent workshops provided mainly by Wyoming community college faculty who were leaders in the field of distance education. Stipends were provided for faculty identified by the colleges who were not on contract during the conference dates. Also, support was provided to Laramie County Community College to cover costs of hosting the event: a total of \$83,000 was dedicated to this project by the commission.

The WCCC supported the continued work of the Wyoming Workforce Alliance, which is composed of the WCCC, the Wyoming Business Council and the Department of Workforce Services. Specifically, the Commission contributed over half of the salary and support costs (\$45,000 from the Incentive Fund) for a program manager who supported the workforce training coordinators on each of the campuses with resources, best practices, development of local alliances, and direct assistance in working with businesses who want training.

Approximately \$50,000 was used from the Incentive Fund to design and execute a statewide media campaign (radio and newspaper) to promote the distance education opportunities at the seven colleges. In addition, approximately \$3,500 was invested in a new, portable, more functional and more attractive display that can be used at multiple events throughout the year to promote the educational services of all Wyoming's colleges.

Wyoming Public Television (WPTV), through the assistance of its Advisory Council, successfully continued its work of acquiring state funding for the next phase of digitization. The more extensive coverage of the state is resulting in a larger number of citizens who can access WPTV programming. This is allowing WPTV the opportunity to expand the type and number of offerings.

Two major task forces were initiated during this reporting period. The Distance Education and Workforce Training Task Forces provided a multitude of recommendations that are statewide priorities, which will be considered for adoption by the appropriate committees during the next reporting period.

The WCCC approves all new credit certificate and degree programs. The WCCC approved two credit programs in FY 04. Sheridan College requested a Medical Transcription credit certificate program be approved. It was previously offered as a non-credit program. Area employers generated the need for this new program because medical transcriptionists are and will be in such high demand. Sheridan College also requested a Criminal Justice program that would lead to an Associate of Applied Science degree replacing the previous Police Science program. The Criminal Justice program has been updated to provide a broader base in choosing a career in

the field as well as to articulate better when students transfer to the University of Wyoming or other four-year institutions. The WCCC approved both new credit programs on June 25, 2004.

The WCCC approves all capital construction requests in excess of fifty thousand dollars for which state funds are or could be eventually applied. To parallel the statutory language regarding bond issues and revenue bonds (W.S. 21-18-313), the commission standard has been to recommend that the colleges establish a seven percent sinking fund (reserve funds) for future maintenance of large projects. Two capital construction projects were approved during FY 04. Below is a summary of the projects.

Western Wyoming Community College: Purchase and minor upgrades of a steel storage building, \$76,000:

The college was in need of facilities to accommodate medium to long-range storage needs of academic affairs, student services and physical resources. State funding was not requested, as local revenues would be used to purchase the building and perform upgrades. This project was approved at the September 26, 2003 WCCC meeting.

Sheridan College: New Diesel/Welding Building, \$14.5 million:

The college's current diesel/welding facility was deficient and in poor condition. As such, Campbell County has agreed to build a larger facility in Gillette and to lease the building to Sheridan College, as was the situation with the current facility. After the facility is built, one additional faculty member would be required for the programs that are housed in the facility. Because Campbell County would be building the facility with local revenues, no state funding was requested. This project was approved at the December 13, 2003 WCCC meeting.

The WCCC prepares the budget requests for the operation and support of the colleges, Wyoming Public Television (WPTV), and the commission. Individual colleges prepare budget requests pursuant to the Uniform Municipal Fiscal Procedures Act, W.S. 16-4-101 through 16-4-601. The WCCC acts as a liaison between the colleges and WPTV and the Wyoming Legislature.

The approved 2003-2004 biennial budget request directed overall fiscal management for the commission during FY 04. Funds appropriated during the 2003 legislative session to fund nursing education programs (Senate Enrolled Act 42), major maintenance for the colleges (House Enrolled Act 79), increased health insurance benefits for eligible state employees (House Enrolled Act 79), and the Wyoming Public Television Council (Senate Enrolled Act 58), were also made a part of the 2004 fiscal year budget.

The WCCC prepared the 2005-2006 biennial budget request in cooperation with the Department of Administration and Information Budget Division. Funding needs are identified for commission administrative func-

tions, college operations (funding allocation model), and WPTV management, which provided the basis for both the standard and exception budget requests, presented to the legislature for approval.

The WCCC reports financial and enrollment audit findings. Audit reports prepared by independent certified public accountants were received from the seven community colleges between October 2003 and January 2004. All colleges received an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2003. There were no reportable conditions for any college related to compliance or internal control over financial reporting based on these audits. The audits of the major federal award programs for each college also found no reportable conditions.

During fiscal year 2003, all colleges implemented Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statements 34/35 – *Basic Financial Statements – and Management's Discussion and Analysis – for Public Colleges and Universities*. This reporting change requires accrual accounting for all governmental activities, and capital assets are generally required to be depreciated. Supplementary information contained in the *Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A)* is also required.

The implementation of this new format was facilitated by the establishment of a task force consisting of commission staff and financial officers from the colleges. Asset capitalization and reporting format structure were two key areas of focus for this task force. Consistency in financial statement reporting format including footnote disclosure continue to provide a focus for the Administrative Services Committee.

The WCCC maintains a management information system (MIS) to support the completion of the studies and reports outlined in statute. As part of this objective, the WCCC has developed an MIS Handbook to ensure timely and consistent report development and delivery. This handbook is viewable on the WCCC web site to electronically assist colleges with vital reporting tasks and deadlines. The MIS includes enrollment reports, data provided by the colleges used in the *Core Indicators of Effectiveness* report, a data element dictionary and common field codes, and fiscal data from each college.

The WCCC reports on the outcomes of partnerships between the colleges and UW and other entities. Serving as comprehensive community colleges, Wyoming's seven colleges recognize the need for collaborative relationships that enable each institution to successfully achieve its mission. In December 2003, the second annual *Partnership Report* was published highlighting the many relationships that Wyoming's community colleges have cultivated and maintain. The report condenses the hundreds of vital partnerships that the colleges have with other entities at the local, state, regional and national levels.

In addition to the partnerships each college maintains, the Wyoming Community College Commission is actively engaged in substantive relationships with key groups and

agencies, both within Wyoming, regionally, as well as nationally. The major categories of partnerships include: distance education, education, Wyoming State government, workforce development, public television and others. All these partnerships enable the commission to better serve Wyoming's seven community colleges.

The WCCC reports on the performance of the community colleges using core measurements defined by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). In March 2004, the WCCC published the second *Annual Performance Report: Core Indicators of Effectiveness*. The AACC structure and measures, which are broken into six missions with one to several core indicators tied to each mission, fit well with comprehensive community colleges like Wyoming's colleges. The accountability-based report indicates that Wyoming community colleges are meeting the expectations of their stakeholders.

Community College Commission organization chart

